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CINCPAC
AMCONSUL DANANG 1053
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE 2664

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 7415

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

SUBJECT: NATIONAL ASSEMBLY: VALIDATION OF PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

REFS: A. SAIGON 7408
B. SAIGON 7353
C. SAIGON 7352

(1) 1. MORNING OCTOBER 2 NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DISCUSSED SPECIAL COMMITTEE REPORT OF IRREGULARITIES IN ELECTION RETURNS. GENERAL NGUYEN NGOC LOAN MADE BRIEF AND RELATIVELY INCONSPICUOUS APPEARANCE IN VISITOR'S GALLERY MIDWAY THROUGH THE SESSION. AS WAS THE CASE AFTERNOON OCTOBER 1 (REF B), DEBATE WAS

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RAMBLING AND INCONCLUSIVE. SEVERAL DEPUTIES VIGOROUSLY ATTACKED

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IMPARTIALITY AND METHOD OF OPERATION OF SPECIAL COMMITTEE, WHILE AN APPROXIMATELY EQUAL NUMBER DEFENDED IT. THERE WERE ALSO OCCASIONAL SUGGESTIONS THAT CHAIRMAN SUU IS LESS THAN IMPARTIAL. NGUYEN MINH DANG PUT IT MOST BLUNTLY, SAYING THAT IT IS HARDLY PROPER FOR CHAIRMAN OF OPPOSITION FRONT WHICH HAS DECLARED ELECTION FRAUDULENT TO PRESIDE OVER ASSEMBLY SESSIONS. DANG CALLED FOR SUU TO STEP DOWN; SUU SWORE THAT HE IS DISINTERESTED AND SELFLESS.

2. FOCUS, SUCH AS IT WAS, OF DEBATE WAS THE ELEVEN CRITERIA USED BY SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO DETERMINE IRREGULARITIES IN ELECTION RETURNS (REPORTED IN REF C). AFTER PERIOD OF GENERAL DISCUSSION, ASSEMBLY DECIDED TO VOTE TO ACCEPT OR REJECT EACH INDIVIDUAL STANDARD.

3. FIRST TO BE DISCUSSED WAS SPECIAL COMMITTEE DECISION THAT ELECTION RETURN WOULD BE CONSIDERED IRREGULAR IF NUMBER OF VOTERS EXCEEDED OR WAS LESS THAN TOTAL NUMBER OF REGULAR BALLOTS PLUS IRREGULAR ENVELOPES. WHEN PUT TO A VOTE 40 DEPUTIES APPROVED THIS AS VALID CRITERION; 14 VOTED FOR ALTERNATIVE TO EFFECT THAT ONLY THOSE VOTES IN EXCESS OF

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NUMBER OF VOTERS WOULD BE CONSIDERED IRREGULAR. MANY DEPUTIES ABSTAINED (100 DEPUTIES ANSWERED ROLL CALL AT BEGINNING OF SESSION, BUT ATTENDANCE AT ANY GIVEN TIME DURING DEBATE WAS CLOSER TO 80).

4. SECOND CRITERION WAS REQUIREMENT THAT REPORTS BE CONSIDERED INVALID IF THEY CONTAINED ERASURES FOR WHICH THERE WAS NO SIGNED EXPLANATION. FORTY-SIX DEPUTIES UPHELD THIS REQUIREMENT AND 29 VOTED FOR ALTERNATIVE WHICH WOULD HAVE RENDERED REPORTS ILLEGAL ONLY IF SPECIAL COMMITTEE SPECIFICALLY SOUGHT CONFIRMATION OF ERASURES AND DID NOT RECEIVE IT.

5. THIRD REQUIREMENT WAS THAT REPORTS BE CONSIDERED ILLEGAL IF THEY LACKED S NATURES OF CHAIRMAN AND OFFICERS OF THE POLING PLACE. FORTY-FIVE DEPUTIES UPHELD THIS

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CRITERION. THIRTY-TWO VOTED FOR ALTERNATIVE SIMILAR TO ONE ABOVE: REPORTS WOULD BE RENDERED IRREGULAR ONLY IF SPECIAL COMMITTEE ASKED FOR, AND DID NOT RECEIVE, EXPLANATION FROM CHAIRMAN AND OFFICERS AS TO WHY THEY DID NOT SIGN.

6. NGUYEN VAN HOI WAS LEADING CRITIC OF SPECIAL COMMITTEE REPORT (AS HE HAS BEEN ALL ALONG). HOI ATTACKED EACH OF

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SPECIAL COMMITTEE CRITERIA, AND PRESENTED EACH OF THE THREE ALTERNATIVES WHICH WERE REJECTED. HIS CRITICISM WAS SUPPORTED VIGOROUSLY AND REPEATEDLY BY BUI VAN GIAI, AND ALSO BY CERTAIN MEMBERS OF THE DEMOCRATIC-ALLIANCE BLOC (E.G. NGUYEN VAN VI, TRUONG TIEN DAT, NGUYEN MINH DANG, VAN KINH). HOWEVER, MOST OF DEMOCRATIC-ALLIANCE HAS NOT YET SPOKEN; NOR HAVE MANY MEMBERS OF GREATER PEOPLES BLOC.

7. IN THE THREE VOTES ON SPECIAL COMMITTEE CRITERIA, MRS BLOC WAS SOLIDLY IN SUPPORT OF COMMITTEE POSITION (I.E. TO ACCEPT EACH OF CRITERION AS VALID). DEMOCRATIC-ALLIANCE DID NOT MAINTAIN SOLID FRONT IN THE VOTES. ALTHOUGH MOST OF ITS HOA HAO AND CATHOLIC MEMBERS SUPPORTED NGUYEN VAN HOI'S POSITION, A NUMBER DID NOT.

8. ASSEMBLY WILL PROBABLY DISCUSS REMAINING EIGHT CRITERIA IN AFTERNOON SESSION. PROCEDURE AFTER THAT IS NOT CLEAR. PRESUMABLY, ASSEMBLY WILL HAVE TO DETERMINE HOW MANY VOTES ARE CONSIDERED IRREGULAR ACCORDING TO CRITERIA WHICH ARE ACCEPTED. CHAIRMAN SUU ASKED MEMBERS TO BE PREPARED TO MEET STRAIGHT THROUGH TO MIDNIGHT. NO DECISION HAS BEEN MADE YET ON SECRET OR OPEN BALLOT AND THIS DECISION WILL PROBABLY NOT BE MADE UNTIL JUST BEFORE FINAL VOTE IS TAKEN.

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ORIGIN/ACTION

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RM/R	REP	AF
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S/AH	P	IO
1	2	5
S/AL	FBO	AID
1		12
S/S	S/P	S/PM
10	1	1
AGR	COM	FRB
INT	LAB	TAR
TR	XMB	AIR
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ARMY	CIA	NAVY
3	20	5
OSD	USIA	NSA
33	10	3
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HANDLING INDICATOR

TO : DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Action assigned to VN

INFO : BANGKOK, CINCPAC FOR POLAD, VIENTIANE

Action taken NOTED

Date of Action 10/5/67

FROM : American Embassy SAIGON

DATE: October 2, 1967

Action Office Symbol

SUBJECT : Analysis of Presidential/Senate Elections by Tran van Tuyen

Name of Officer

REF :

Tran van Tuyen, former Deputy Prime Minister and defeated Senate candidate on List No. 17, has written an extended analysis of the conduct, significance, and implications of the Presidential/Senate elections of September 3. The analysis was published in Chinh Luan on September 16-17. The editor and publisher of Chinh Luan, Dang van Sung, a long-time friend and political associate of Tran van Tuyen, was himself elected to the Senate on List No. 13 (Tran van Don). A summary of the analysis is attached as Enclosure No. 1.

Like his conversation, Tuyen's analysis is cool and comparatively dispassionate. Although he has admitted to being disappointed that he was not elected to the Senate (his List ran twenty-fifth), Tuyen is philosophical about the outcome and regards it as a general improvement over the previous situation. He is currently active in organizing a political grouping tentatively named the Front for Social Action, but details concerning its composition and policies are not yet firm. Tuyen is probably a better political analyst than an organizer.

In the analysis of the elections, Tuyen makes the following principal points:

a) The old junta was legitimatized, legalized, and made civilian.

b) Despite defects in the elections law and the organization of the elections, there is a new regime, anyway. We have some freedom, too. We have a chance to "remake our life."

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Drafted by: POL:TPConlon (9/28/67)

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